



News Release

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January 28, 1999
Release Number 99-05

MIDS-LVT makes first flight aboard F/A-18

PATUXENT RIVER, Md., -- The Navy's new Multi-functional Information Distribution System Low Volume Terminal marked its first flight aboard a Naval Air Warfare Center's Aircraft Division F/A-18 Hornet here at the Patuxent River, Md., test center Tuesday.



Test points during first flight included MIDS TACAN navigation, inter-system compatibility and intra-system compatibility checks, and ECS performance monitoring. MIDS was operating in the TACAN mode only and no Link-16 data was exchanged.

MIDS is an advanced Link-16 Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (C³I) system incorporating high capacity, jam resistant, digital communication links for exchange of near real-time tactical information, including both data and voice, amongst air, ground and sea elements. In addition to performing C³I functions, MIDS serves as a navigation aid by providing relative navigation position-keeping functions through the use of Precise Participant Location and Identification (PPLI) Link-16 messages and incorporates TACAN functionality that replaces the AN/ARN-118 TACAN system. MIDS is also fully interoperable with the Joint Tactical Information Distribution System (JTIDS), an earlier Link-16 system.

The F/A-18 first flight of the MIDS-LVT is part of the initial developmental test phase planned to validate the technical capability of the advanced system. It is one of many test phases in a larger test program grouped into developmental and operational tests designed to validate the technical capability and effectiveness of the MIDS-LVT. This early test phase is comprised of Electromagnetic Environmental Effects (E³) testing, Environmental Control System flight and ground testing, Carrier Suitability (CVS) flight test, and TACAN flight testing of MIDS.

The MIDS first flight and flights to follow will continue to validate MIDS TACAN functionality and the Terminal's ability to receive Link-16 information from other platforms. Carrier Suitability (CVS) will also be evaluated. Numerous catapult launches and carrier landings will be performed to determine the MIDS ability to withstand the severity of actual carrier operations. A ground test to evaluate Environmental Control System performance will be conducted at the Aircraft Test and Evaluation Facility (ATEF) located at NAWC-AD, Patuxent River. This initial test phase culminates in June 1999.

MIDS Low Volume Terminal (MIDS-LVT) is a multi-national, multi-service cooperative program sponsored by five NATO countries (United States, France, Italy, Germany, Spain) with the U.S. Navy as lead service for U.S. applications and overall program manager. A contract was awarded to MIDSCO Inc., of Fairfield, N.J., which is a consortium of defense contractors from each of the participating countries.

Marconi Aerospace Systems Inc., of Wayne, N.J. is the U.S. prime subcontractor. The program is managed by the Navy's MIDS International Program Office which operates under an international agreement

among the five participating nations. Navy ships will be the first U.S. platform equipped with MIDS-LVT. However, the MIDS-LVT buy for ships is relatively small. The F/A-18 and F-16 aircraft MIDS acquisition represents the majority (1,650+) of the United States MIDS-LVT buy (80 percent). McDonnell Douglas Aircraft (now The Boeing Company) was awarded the integration contract for MIDS-LVT in the F/A-18.



The U.S. Navy's newest strike fighter, the F/A-18F *Super Hornet*, makes a final approach to the flight deck of the U.S. Navy's newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), during the aircraft's initial sea trials Jan. 18, 1997, off the coast of North Carolina. U.S. Navy Photo by Airman Recruit Adam Plantz.

The MIDS Low Volume Terminal flew aboard F/A-18 D-51 BuNo 164040 of the Naval Strike Aircraft Test Squadron operating out of NAWC-AD Patuxent River, Md., during Tuesday's test. The two-seat Hornet aircraft was flown by Maj. Doug Hurley and Cmdr. Ric Harned.

The contract for the engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) of this command, control, communications and intelligence (C³I) program was awarded in March 1994 by the U.S. Navy on behalf of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United States. Managed by the MIDS International Program Office, MIDS has been heralded as a model of acquisition reform and international cooperation. The program has been recognized with the David Packard Acquisition Excellence Award in March 1997 and the Department of Defense Value Engineering Award in May 1997. According to Dr.

Jacques Gansler, Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), this is "the first successful major cooperative development in the military electronics field."

In the current development phase, the participant countries have funded 124 EMD terminals and associated support equipment. MIDS customers include the European EF2000, the French *RAFALE*, and the U.S. F/A-18, F-16 and F-15. International production is expected to exceed 5,000 terminals. Earlier program deliveries included 19 MIDS interface simulators that are being used to integrate the capability into an array of combat systems.

MIDSCO Inc., as the prime contractor, has a multinational management and technical staff that includes professionals from its five member (shareholder) companies: ENOSA; Marconi Aerospace Systems Inc., CNI Division (formerly GEC-Marconi Hazeltine); MIDSpA (formerly Italtel); Daimler Benz Chrysler Aerospace (DASA) (formerly Siemens); and Thomson, CSF. This team designs, develops, and manufactures the MIDS-LVT for integration on a variety of platforms. The F/A-18, being the lead aircraft platform, now joins the team in flight-testing.

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Last update: Wednesday, December 06, 2000